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## Recommendations for an effective Manitoba Water Management Strategy

News

LWF

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In 2018, the Manitoba Climate and Green Plan Act established an Expert Advisory Council to provide advice and recommendations to the Minister of Conservation and Climate. In August, this council solicited stakeholder input on [a provincial water management strategy for Manitoba](#).

Our submission advocates for a science-based, outcome-focused strategy to effectively translate policy into meaningful practice to safeguard our shared waters. Such a strategy must be supported by robust evidence, include measurable targets and defined timelines for action, and strengthen monitoring and reporting systems.

More specifically, we offer 14 recommendations including:

**Increasing Indigenous representation at decision-making tables:** Indigenous people have a sacred relationship with water and decisions about water quality and quantity have direct impacts on Indigenous livelihoods and community health. Yet Indigenous rightsholders and governments are largely absent from water decision-making processes. Genuine inclusion of Indigenous people in the development of Manitoba's Water Management Strategy must recognize their unique water rights and acknowledge the jurisdiction of Indigenous governments.

**Prioritizing phosphorus reduction to address the eutrophication of Lake Winnipeg:** The role of phosphorus in promoting algae growth has been demonstrated by IISD-Experimental Lakes Area through five decades of research on whole-lake ecosystems. This robust body of research, conspicuously absent from Manitoba's approach to addressing eutrophication, has been used across the world to manage and reduce harmful algal blooms. Manitoba's Water Management Strategy must focus on phosphorus in combatting freshwater eutrophication, in order to make effective use of public funds.

**Using community-based monitoring data to support provincial water decision-making:** In the Red River Valley, which contributes 68 per cent of the phosphorus load to Lake Winnipeg, consistent phosphorus hotspots have been identified over multiple years by the [Lake Winnipeg Community-Based Monitoring Network \(LWCBMN\)](#). Phosphorus-reduction efforts must be targeted in these hotspots in order to be effective. The collaborative effort and high-quality data generated by LWCBMN should be acknowledged and used to inform Manitoba's Water Management Strategy.

According to the engagement document, the feedback provided to the Expert Advisory Council will be reviewed and considered during the development of the advice and recommendations that will be presented to the Minister of Conservation and Climate later this year.

At LWF, we remain committed to advocating for change and coordinating action to improve the health of Lake Winnipeg. We believe that policy and practices must be informed by evidence and effectively enforced, our ongoing efforts aim to ensure governments remain accountable to their commitments to evidence-based water policy.

You can read our [Manitoba water management strategy submission](#) and other policy submissions on our [Resources for Citizens](#) page.

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